

**Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records  
History and Archives Division**

**Note on records relating to Winnie Ruth Judd**

**1931-1998**

**Historical Note**

Winnie Ruth Judd was accused of killing two women in Phoenix, Arizona on October 16, 1931. She had known them for some time as neighbors and roommates. The alleged motive was jealousy over a local businessman by the name of Jack Halloran. The bodies of the murdered women were cut into pieces, put in trunks and shipped to California where a railroad baggage handler noticed a peculiar odor and saw some liquid leaking from the trunks.

Winnie, or Ruth as she was usually called, was arrested and extradited to Arizona. A jury found her guilty on February 8, 1932, although she maintained that her actions were taken in self-defense. Jack Halloran was indicted but not convicted.

Winnie Ruth Judd was sentenced to death but claimed that she was not responsible for her actions by reason of insanity. The state committed Judd to the Arizona State Hospital where she escaped twice in 1939, once in 1947 and 1951, and twice in 1952. A grand jury recommended her death sentence be commuted to life imprisonment in 1952. In 1962, she escaped to California where she lived under an assumed name until 1969, when she was discovered and extradited to Arizona again. Governor Jack Williams granted her a pardon in 1971. She then moved to the San Francisco Bay area. Once dubbed the "trunk murderess," Winnie Ruth Judd died in Phoenix, AZ on October 23, 1998.

**Scope and Content Note**

The Arizona State Archives holds records from six government agencies on the Winnie Ruth Judd murder case: the Department of Health Services, Board of Pardons and Paroles, Governor's Office, Supreme Court, Maricopa County Superior Court and Pinal County Superior Court. Records include correspondence, petitions, applications, statements, newspaper clippings, extraditions, subpoenas, judgments and verdicts.

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**Note on Access**

**Records in Record Group 92, Supreme Court, are restricted; please consult the Arizona State Archives staff to request permission to use these materials.**

**Selected Records Relating to Winnie Ruth Judd**

**RG 20. Board of Directors of State Institutions.** Findings & Decision of Board of Pardons and Paroles, Application for Reprieve, reasons for granting reprieve. 1933. Box 1.

**RG 70. Board of Pardons and Paroles.** Minutes of Board, Findings and Decision of the Board for application for commutation of sentence, application for reprieve, application for reprieve from death sentence; correspondence of Rev. H.J. McKinnell seeking pardon for his daughter, Winnie Ruth Judd; parole denied, death sentence commuted to life sentence, application for commutation of sentence. 1933-1971. Microfilm 102.1.1-102.1.2.

**RG 1. Governor's Office, SG 8. George W.P. Hunt.** Correspondence, poem, newspaper clipping of opinion in Judd case. 1931-1932. Box 4, folder 32.

**RG 1. Governor's Office, SG 11. Benjamin Baker Moeur.** Correspondence, clippings on innocence or guilt of Judd, letters from Parole Board, Rev. McKinnell. 1933-1934. Box 5A, folder 20.

**RG 1. Governor's Office, SG 12. Rawghlie Clement Stanford.** Correspondence regarding pardon. 1937. Box 9, folder 15.

**RG 1. Governor's Office, SG 13. Robert Taylor Jones.** Correspondence re: Winnie Ruth Judd practicing beauty culture at the State Hospital. 1939. Box 12, folder 9.

Telegram, statement, copies of legislative petition to the Board of Pardons and Paroles asking that death penalty to be removed. 1939. Box 14, folder 4.

**RG 1. Governor's Office, SG 14. Sidney Preston Osborn.** Correspondence re: plan of Winnie Ruth Judd to escape from State Hospital. 1941-1942. Box 17, folder 10.

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Correspondence regarding pardon. 1947. Box 38A, folder 8.

**RG 1. Governor's Office, SG 20. Governor Jack Williams.** Memo and correspondence, Board of Pardons and Paroles action re: application for commutation. 1969. Box 490.

Correspondence regarding pardon. 1970. Box 533.

Correspondence. 1970. Box 527.

**RG 1. Governor's Office, SG 1. Subject files.** Correspondence in State Hospital file regarding a 1952 escape and treatment. 1953. Box 176.

**RG 1. Governor's Office.** Extraditions from California. 1931. Microfilm 17.2.4. 1969. Microfilm 17.2.48.

**RG 107. Maricopa County, SG 8. Superior Court.** Register of Actions, criminal cases #11342 and #11340. 1931-1933. Volume 25. Microfilm 6.16.9.

**Register of Action**, criminal case #11928. 1932-1933. J.J. Halloran indictment. Volume 26. Microfilm 6.16.9.

**Criminal case exhibits.** 1931-1935. Boxes 1-5.

**RG 111. Pinal County.** Insanity and State Hospital records. 1932-1969. Statement of Winnie Ruth Judd taken at the Arizona State Prison. Dec. 19, 1932.

**RG 92. Supreme Court.** Petitions, verdict, subpoenas, notes, autopsy report, telegrams, letters, police report, applications for reprieve, newspaper clippings, and photographs. 1931-1934. Box 1 & 2. **[These records are restricted by order of the Arizona Supreme Court. Patrons must complete application for access to restricted collections]**

**Vertical File.** Contains newspaper clippings.

**Photographs:** See photograph database at <http://photos.lib.az.us> for access to these Images.

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**Books:**

Bommersbach, Janna. *The Trunk Murderess, Winnie Ruth Judd : The Truth About an American Crime Legend Revealed at Last*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1992.

Dobkins, J. Dwight. *Winnie Ruth Judd :The Trunk Murder*. New York , Grosset & Dunlap, 1973.